DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 147 299 SP 011 930

AUTHOR Goodwin, Jean
TITLE Constraints on Teacher Education.
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 15p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Accountability; Evaluation Methods; *Program Development; *Teacher Evaluation; *Testing Problems

ABSTRACT

The public demand for accountability, legislative mandates, and increased unionization of teachers have focused attention on the inadequacies of traditional teacher evaluation procedures. Attempts to design models that differentiate effective and noneffective teaching have not produced agreed-upon sets of competencies, characteristics or behaviors common to "good" teachers. A review of the research literature into teacher evaluation reveals that the major factors that impose constraints on effective teacher evaluation are: (1) teacher resistance to evaluation procedures that they perceive as arbitrary or serving only administrative purposes; (2) the lack of agreement concerning criteria on which evaluation should be based; (3) legal issues arising from fair dismissal laws, collective bargaining, and negotiations; and (4) human, conceptual, and technical skills of the evaluator which either negate or confirm the validity of the evaluation process. (Author/MJB)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED147299

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

CONSTRAINTS ON TEACHER EDUCATION

Jean Goodwin

Curriculum Director

Terrell County Board of Education

Dawson, Georgia

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Carrie L. Brown

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND THE ERIC SYSTEM CONTRACTORS."

As the consumer movement has expanded to encompass the educational setting, the demands for accountability in terms of return for tax dollars have led to increased demands for more definitive evaluation of teachers. Accompanying moves toward teacher unionization and conflicting views concerning evaluation purposes have combined with the cry for accountability to produce constraints on teacher evaluation which were previously ill-defined or non-existent. Although there is general agreement that teachers should be evaluated, controversy is evident concerning procedures which should be established, criteria useful for assessing teacher effectiveness, and the validity of evaluation by administrators who may possess inadequate evaluative skills.

Method of Review

A review of recent literature pertaining to teacher evaluation was conducted in order to locate appropriate books and journal articles. The following guides were used:

Current Index to Journals in Education - January, 1974 to October, 1976

Sociological Abstracts - January, 1974 to October, 1976

Research in Education (ERIC) - January, 1970 to September, 1976

SP011930

The University of Georgia Library Card Catalogue

Selected listings from the following subject headings were reviewed: teacher evaluation, teacher attitudes, teacher-administrator relations, evaluation criteria, evaluation methods, teacher competencies, administrator competencies, teacher dismissal. Resources which provided some insight concerning identifiable constraints on teacher evaluation were listed in the bibliography. Twenty-four references were located in which constraints were specifically identified or implied in areas related to accountability, teacher resistance, poorly defined or controversial evaluative criteria, legal restraints, and evaluator competencies.

Findings

Declining public opinion, inflationary conditions, and sometimes adverse media reports have caused American taxpayers to demand that they get their money's worth out of public education (Hammons, 1975, p. 1; Popham, 1974, p. 35). Legislatures in a number of states have responded by mandating systems which prescribe evaluation and/or certification based on teacher performance (Hammons, 1975, p. 2; Hazard, 1975, p. 39). The public widely accepts the notion that if all teachers performed effectively then all students would achieve at approximately the same levels, an idea which is reinforced for many persons by the attention focused on disparities between local means and the national

"norm" on standardized achievement measures. If students in a local system fall below national norms in achievement, the likely interpretation is that not much teaching is going on.

The demand for accountability in the educational process has resulted in pressures upon educational leaders to design evaluation procedures which assure that incompetent or ineffective teachers do not remain in the classroom. Berger (1974) refers to a negative public feeling about principals "based on the public belief that incompetent teachers who are hurting students continue to teach and no one is getting rid of them. Unfortunately, as the public sees it, the purpose of evaluating teachers is punitive - to eliminate incompetent teachers" (p. 148). This view is in direct conflict with a major purpose of evaluation as perceived by educators, to assist the teacher in identifying strengths and weaknesses and in improving areas of weakness. The dual roles imposed by the conflicting views place a degree of constraint upon the evaluator. Bolton (1973) states that:

> When the principal or supervisor is both responsible for helping the teacher improve and accountable to the school system for results, he sometimes has the tendency to emphasize accountability to the detriment of his ability to help the teacher. At other times, his ability to help the teacher is reduced simply because he has the responsibility

of accountability. (p. 24)

Teachers' resistance to evaluation, according to Zelenak and Snider (1975, p. 116), depends upon teachers' perceptions of the purpose of the evaluation process. Significant results of their study strongly suggest that teachers have negative feelings when they see the evaluation as serving administrative purposes. Conversely, teachers who believe the evaluation is for instructional purposes exhibit more positive attitudes. These findings are supported by King and Jordan (1972, p. 1).

Hammons (1975) attributes negative teacher attitudes to their disillusionment with traditional evaluation systems. He describes such models as focused on "a measurable amount of concern, as well as the shadow of threat, with limited potential of instructional improvement" (p. 2). He further states that:

> In many cases, dismissals followed a process of "shock treatment," whereby the individual was notified just prior to the mandated dismissal date. Decisions were made on personal opinions without documentation or justification. (p. 2).

An assumption of the writers cited above is that poor communication is one underlying cause of teacher resistance to evaluation. Bolton (1973, p. 26) cautions that morale cannot be high if teachers are fearful or hostile. Since unknowns contribute to fear, evaluation procedures that have clear, precise, complete written

statements of purpose are more likely to foster a sound basis for open communications and cooperative relationships than programs designed around ambiguous or unwritten purposes.

Constraints resulting from teacher resistance to evaluation are particularly evident when local or national teacher organizations wage campaigns against further legislative or local mandates which single out the teacher in the accountability process. A major issue in such campaigns is the lack of verifiable data which demonstrate teacher performance to be a causal factor in pupil achievement (Hazard, p. 39).

The inadequacies of using student achievement as the measure of teacher effectiveness have been detailed by Thomas (1974, pp. 1-7), Roth and Mahoney (1975, pp. 1-10), Popham (1974, p. 35), and Soar (1973, pp. 205-211). Studies in which low or even negative correlations were obtained for successive years of student growth were conducted by Soar (1966), Rosenshine (1970, pp. 647-662), and Brophy (1972). These studies were based on the premise that if the teacher is only one of a number of factors contributing to pupil growth, then the correlation of growth for one pupil group with another the following year should not be high. To hold the teacher solely responsible for student growth seems "a major oversimplification concerning the many other factors involved" (Soar, 1973, p. 211).

The emphasis by legislatures or local boards on

evaluating effectiveness through assessment of student achievement despite the lack of evidence that the teacher is the sole or even the prime factor influencing student growth, typifies the controversy concerning appropriate evaluative criteria. Assessment of teacher characteristics, productivity (in terms of student gain), teaching activities, and teacher competencies (affective and cognitive), all have their advocates; however, according to Thomas (1974), "no general agreement exists as to what constitutes effective teaching, and no standards of teacher effectiveness are commonly agreed upon"(p. 1).

Polhemus (1975) states that, "For sixty years educators have been concerned with assessing staff 'effectiveness.' Perhaps we are still concerned with this problem because we have been chasing a will-of-the-wisp" (p. 1). In a lighter vein, Wilson (1975) says:

> Teacher evaluations tend to be like clothes. Whatever is in vogue at the time is utilized extensively by those who are attempting to remain modern and current. If you stay around long enough, the 'hot' methods of today will probably recycle to be the new discovery of the future. (p. 1).

The question of what constitutes effective teaching thus becomes a constraint in teacher evaluation.

Legal issues involved in fair dismissal laws, according to Berger (1974, p. 152), may intimidate principals and supervisors so that they lack the

courage to collect adequate documentation of incompetence. Bard (1972, pp. 20-22) cites evidence that school officials often fail to provide due process to teachers dismissed for incompetence. Legal constraints are significantly reduced when supervisors exhibit a clear understanding of the law. The mandate to provide opportunity and assistance in remediating difficulties may have a positive effect in that evaluations must be specific and include detailed cooperative plans for improvement.

Collective bargaining laws are viewed by Dempsey (1975, p. 63) as creating confusion about the role of the principal since such laws permit teacher bargaining units to negotiate directly with the board of education. It is conceivable that negotiations concerning evaluation procedures could impose fairly rigid legal constraints on teacher evaluation.

It was previously pointed out that supervisors who have poorly developed communications skills may elicit negative teacher attitudes which preclude effective evaluation. Inadequate interpersonal relationships, administrator bias, and lack of commitment to evaluation have also been cited as major factors contributing to the poor quality of evaluations (Blumberg, 1974, p. 55; Bolton, 1973, p. 31; Husarik and Wynkoop, 1974, pp. 5-15; Redfern, 1975, p. 8). Berger (1974) says that:

One reason principals have not evaluated teachers

> is that they thought teachers would not like evaluation and so it was better not to rock the boat. Another reason is that superintendents, the public, and boards of education have not emphatically told principals to play this role. A third reason is that many principals do not see it as their role. A fourth reason is that administrators have allowed too much of the paperwork of administration to stay on their desks and then used the paperwork as an excuse that they didn't have time. A fifth reason is that superintendents have often seen the role of the principal as strictly a paper pusher and a public relations man. (p. 152).

Erikson (1965, p. 16) points out that teachers will accept the principal's supervision only when they perceive him to be competent to assist them in a given subject area or grade level. As teaching assignments become more specialized and teacher qualifications rise, the principal's competency becomes suspect (Faber and Shearron, 1970, p. 348).

Several writers, in discussing modern evaluation strategies, recognize lack of evaluator competencies as a major constraint in a given evaluation design (Bolton, 1973, pp. 29-30; Hammons, 1975; Redfern, 1975, p. 8; Roth and Mahoney, 1975, p. 40). Emphasis on the assessment of affective as well as cognitive behaviors may present

particular problems since both supervisors and teachers may have little knowledge concerning methods that can be used to measure affective outcomes (Payne, 1976, p. 354). Castetter (1976, p. 246) believes that in order to perform the evaluation task effectively, administrators must possess a variety of human, conceptual, and technical skills, and that these skills must, for the most part, be developed.

Given the constraints as identified, administrators themselves may resist the evaluation process. Through interviews with a number of principals, Bolton (1973) ascertained the following to be the primary factors responsible for administrator resistance:

(a) A general lack of certainty regarding the criteria, the measurement process, and the procedures for the analysis and interpretation of data.

(b) The evaluator's dislike of being in a position to manipulate or adversely affect other people's lives.

(c) A fear of precipitating an unpleasant reaction on the part of the person being evaluated. This reaction then prevents a relationship conducive to helping the individual improve.

(d) A lack of ability to cope with the weaknesses of the individual in terms of organizational needs and his ability to improve. This is sometimes linked with a failure to communicate to the

individual the necessity of dealing with both the individual and organizational problems.

(e) A failure to see the relationship of evaluation of others to the purposes of the evaluator.

(f) An inability to organize time so that adequate observations can be made. (p. 96).

The above factors are directly related to the constraints which have been identified or implied by a number of writers concerned with improving the evaluation process.

Conclusions

The public demand for accountability, legislative mandates, and increased unionization of teachers have focused attention on the inadequacies of traditional teacher evaluation procedures. Attempts to design models which differentiate effective and non-effective teaching have not produced agreed upon sets of competencies, characteristics, or behaviors common to "good" teachers.

Major factors which impose constraints on effective teacher evaluation are:

(1) Teacher resistance to evaluation procedures which they perceive as arbitrary or as serving only administrative purposes.

(2) The lack of agreement concerning criteria on which evaluation should be based.

(3) Legal issues arising from fair dismissal laws, collective bargaining and negotiations.

(4) Human, conceptual, and technical skills of the evaluator which either negate or confirm the validity of the evaluation process.

REFERENCES

Bard, B. Who's to blame for the trouble in our schools? Unfeeling teachers? Ladies Home Journal, March, 1976, pp. 20-22.

Berger, E. The evaluation of teachers. Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1974, 58 (382), 147-152.

Blumberg, A. Supervisors and teachers: A private cold war. Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1974.

Bolton, D. L. Selection and evaluation of teachers. Berkeley: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1973.

Brophy, J. E. Stability in teacher effectiveness. R and D Report Series 77, The Research and Development Center for Teacher Evaluation, The University of Texas at Austin, July, 1972. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 066 438)

Castetter, W. B. The personnel function in educational administration. New York: Macmillan, 1976, pp. 231-274.

Dempsey, R. A. Principals and negotiations. Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1975, 58 (389) 60-63.

Erickson, D. A. Changes in the principalship. The National Elementary Principal, 1965, 44 (5), 16-20.

Faber, C. F. & Shearron, G. F. Elementary school administration: Theory and practice. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1974.

Hammons, A. L. How to evaluate teachers on performance. Paper presented at the annual meeting of The National School Boards Association, April, 1975. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 106 921)

Hazard, T. Teacher evaluation: A model for integrating intents with outcomes. Educational Technology, 1975, 15 (8), 39-41.

Husarik, E. J. & Wynkoop, R. J. A principal's dilemma: Can supervising be collegial? Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1974, 58 (386), 13-19.

King, B & Jordan, W. Evaluation and assessment of certificated personnel. Fresno County Department of Education, Fresno, California, July, 1972. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 104 907)

Payne, D. A. Overcoming obstacles to the classroom assessment of affective learning outcomes. Clearing House, 1976, 49 (8), 354-356.

Polhemus, W. D. Teacher evaluation: Process accountability. A practical approach to staff competence. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, February, 1975. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 102 688)

Popham, W. J. Teacher evaluation and domain-referenced teaching. Educational Technology, 1974, 14 (6), 35-37.

Redfern, G. Teacher evaluation: The Big Picture. Colorado Journal of Educational Research, 1975, 14 (3), 8-12.

Rosenshine, B. The stability of teacher effects upon student achievement. Review of Educational Research, 1970, 40, 647-662.

Roth, R. A. & Mahoney, P. Teacher competencies and assessment techniques. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, 1975. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 104 838.)

Soar, R. S. Accountability: Assessment problems and possibilities. Journal of Teacher Education, 1973, 24 (3), 205-212.

Soar, R. S. An integrative approach to classroom learning. National Institute of Mental Health Project Numbers 5-R11 MH 01096 to the University of South Carolina and 7R11 to Temple University, 1966. (Soar, R. S. Accountability: Assessment problems and possibilities. Journal of Teacher Education, 1973, 24 (3) 205-212.)

Thomas, D. The principal and teacher evaluation. Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 1974, 58, 1-7.

Wilson, L. S. How to evaluate teacher performance. Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the National School Boards Association, April, 1975. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED 105 643)

Zelenak, M. J. & Snyder, B. C. Teacher perceptions of the teacher evaluation process. California Journal of Educational Research, 1974, 25, 205-212.